

Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Northern District of New York

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, February 9, 2022

Former SUNY Delhi Student Sentenced for Unemployment Insurance Fraud

BINGHAMTON, NEW YORK – Makahi Daevon Bryant, 20, of Brooklyn, New York was sentenced yesterday to three years of probation for his role in an unemployment insurance fraud scheme, announced United States Attorney Carla B. Freedman; Matthew Scarpino, Acting Special Agent in Charge of Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), Buffalo Field Office; and Jonathan Mellone, Special Agent in Charge, New York Region, United States Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General (USDOL-OIG).

As part of his previously entered guilty plea to one count of access device fraud, Bryant admitted he obtained debit cards containing unemployment insurance benefits issued by the State of California in the names of other people. During September and October 2020, while a student at the State University of New York at Delhi (SUNY Delhi), Bryant effected over \$13,000 in transactions using two debit cards to obtain cash, goods, and services. Bryant was not authorized to use the debit cards by the people whose names and other personal information were used to apply for the unemployment insurance benefits, or by the State of California.

Senior United States District Judge Thomas J. McAvoy also ordered Bryant to perform 60 hours of community service, pay restitution to the State of California, and forfeit assets.

This case was investigated by Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) and the United States Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General (USDOL-OIG), with assistance from the New York State University Police at Delhi, and prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney John T. Chisholm.

On May 17, 2021, the Attorney General established the COVID-19 Fraud Enforcement Task Force to marshal the resources of the Department of Justice in partnership with agencies across government to enhance efforts to combat and prevent pandemic-related fraud. The Task Force bolsters efforts to investigate and prosecute the most culpable domestic and international criminal actors and assists agencies tasked with administering relief programs to prevent fraud by, among other methods, augmenting and incorporating existing coordination mechanisms, identifying resources and techniques to uncover fraudulent actors and their schemes, and sharing and harnessing information and insights gained from prior enforcement efforts. For more information on the Department's response to the pandemic, please visit <https://www.justice.gov/coronavirus>.

Anyone with information about allegations of attempted fraud involving COVID-19 can report it by calling the Department of Justice's National Center for Disaster Fraud (NCDF) Hotline at 866-720-5721 or via the NCDF Web Complaint Form at: <https://www.justice.gov/disaster-fraud/ncdf-disaster-complaint-form>.

Topic(s):
Coronavirus
Financial Fraud

Component(s):
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